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'ON GUARD' AT WINDSOR CASTLE.

Though the honour implied in the protection of the principal residence of the sovereign is considerable, military duty at Windsor is not by any means held in high estimation by soldiers, that is to say by those whose lot it is to perform the ordinary functions of 'sentry-go' around the castle. In a word, the duty is 'hard.' This term, applied to peace-time soldiering, means that the men have few 'nights in bed'—the criterion by which such service is invariably judged. At some stations the rank and file have as many as twenty of these coveted consecutive nights in barracks; but at Windsor the present writer has at times enjoyed the honour of passing every third night on the exposed terraces of the castle; and as the 'Queen's Regulations' lay particular stress on each soldier having at least one 'night in bed' before going on guard, it will be granted that the Windsor duty is not unjustly considered somewhat trying. Perhaps a glimpse at the inner life of the Castle-guard may interest some readers.

The armed party, which consists of some fifty soldiers, is under the command of an officer, assisted by two sergeants, together with as many corporals, and it enters upon its twenty-four hours' tour of duty in the forenoon. A drummer-boy also 'mounts:' his chief employment being to go messages and to carry the lantern used in making the nocturnal 'rounds.' When the guard marches into the lower ward of the castle, after having in its progress considerably enlivened the quiet streets of Windsor, the 'old' guard is formally relieved, and the men not immediately required as sentinels take possession of the guard-room—a large, comparatively modern building, in the vicinity of the antique Curfew Tower. With a view, probably, to the preservation of discipline, the two sergeants are provided with a 'bunk,' a small portion of the area of the apartment partitioned off, and fitted with a miniature guardbed. Here they often employ their time in the making up of pay-lists, duty-rosters,* and the like. On entering the guard-room, the privates quickly divest themselves of their valises and folded greatcoats; for it is now admitted by the authorities that a sentry may march about quite 'steadily' without being constantly burdened with his kit. The valises are suspended from rows of pegs furnished for this purpose; and—what might in fine weather seem surprising—the greatcoats set free from their tightly buckled straps. Ostensibly, the 'loose' coats are necessary to spread out on the guard-bed, so as to slightly soften that uneasy couch, as well as to prevent dust, which may there have lodged, from adhering to the tunics of recumbent guardsmen. But the real reason for shaking out these garments frequently is to allow them to dry, because in many cases they have been liberally sprinkled with water before being buckled up, to insure a more compact 'fold.'

A stranger to things military, on surreptitiously glancing in at the guardroom door early in the day, and while the sentry's back was turned, would notice a large number of white basins drawn up on the tables and 'dressed' with extraordinary precision. These vessels are placed in position for the reception of the soup, which is served shortly before mid-day, and they bring us to the important subject of the culinary department. There are four cooks connected with the castle guard. One is 'corporal of the cooks;' another is 'standing' (or permanent) cook; and the remaining two are merely sent daily on 'fatigue' from the barracks. The provisions are conveyed to the castle in a barrow of peculiar construction, and deposited in the cook-house—a place not at all resembling a conventional kitchen, but both in situation and appearance very like the dungeons one is occasionally introduced to when visiting ancient strongholds. In this dismal region are capacious 'coppers,' in any one of which soup, beef, vegetables, or tea can be prepared.

* *Roster*, in military language, is the list of persons liable to a certain duty.

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CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

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To return, however, to the proceedings of the members of the guard. When they have satisfactorily arranged their equipments and, above all, thoroughly repolished their boots, a corporal calls for silence. This obtained, he begins to make out the duty-roll, or 'detail' as it is usually termed, of the sentries; and when the detail is completed, he affixes to the wall in a primitive fashion—with pieces of damped ration bread—a short abstract, in which the men are represented by figures. To the uninitiated observer, the purport of this might be rather puzzling. After a particular numeral, for example, is inscribed the word 'Cocoa.' The soldier to whom it refers has assigned to him the task of preparing the beverage named, which is issued to the guard at midnight—the 'standing' cook having the privilege of every night in bed. The abstract is attentively perused by the men, who

sometimes take private memoranda of the parts of its contents that apply to them individually. Not unfrequently this is done with a pencil on their pipeclayed gun-slings, in such a position as not to be apparent to the inspecting officer.

As soon as every one has mastered the corporal's hieroglyphics, a sergeant issues from the bunk already alluded to, bearing the 'order-board,' which is of rather portentous dimensions. As the great majority of the men know the regulations off by heart, they are read in a slightly hasty and perfunctory manner; though, with true military exactness, not a word is omitted. There is little in the list of orders that calls for special remark; but one paragraph is, we imagine, almost if not quite unknown elsewhere; it relates to the conduct of the corporals when marching round the 'reliefs.' If, when so marching along with his men, Her Majesty the Queen should meet or pass the party, the non-commissioned officer is directed to halt his subordinates, draw them up in 'open order,' and see that the appropriate salute is rendered. The curious order which prohibits soldiers from 'working at their trade while on guard' is of course represented on the board; but as a matter of fact, some men pass a good deal of their spare time in the not very martial occupation of making beadwork pincushions. These articles, however, command somewhat tempting prices, especially in the metropolis.

While the men of the guard have thus been engaged, the commandant has taken over his quarters, adjacent to the guardroom, and reached by a pretty long stone stair, well worn by the iron-shod heels of many generations of corporals and drummer-boys. Soon after mounting duty, the officer is joined by his servant, who brings with him a portmanteau containing various comforts. A cooking department is also required in the case of the officer, whose meals, however, are conveyed to him by the messmen from barracks. Before long, the steps of a corporal ascending the stair warn the captain of the guard that the hour approaches for him to march off the 'second relief.'

The 'posts' are numerous. One sentinel paces about in front of the guardroom, much of his attention being devoted to saluting the Knights Pensioners of Windsor, who reside in the lower ward of the castle. Another soldier has ample leisure to examine the architectural features of the celebrated Round Tower, at the base of which he is stationed. A third takes post on the North Terrace, where a splendid prospect enlivens the monotony of his vigil, and whence, if of a

philological turn, he can contemplate the windings of the river which are said to have given the place the name Wind-shore, or Windsor. Or, if historically inclined, he may recollect that the North Terrace was once the favourite promenade, for an hour before dinner, of Queen Elizabeth, to whom it is alleged the English soldier was originally indebted for his daily ration of beef. Then there are two sentries on the eastern façade of the castle. These men are in close proximity to the royal apartments. By night, they do not challenge in the ordinary manner, but by two stamps with the right foot; and they are charged to pronounce the words 'All's well' in an undertone. The grand entrance to the upper ward of the castle is in the keeping of a 'double' sentry, as is also a gate near at hand; and there are several other sentry-posts which it would be tedious to visit in detail. In each sentry-box hangs a heavy watchcoat, which the soldier may put on when he thinks fit, and of the large buttons on this cloak he is expected to take sedulous care.

By night, the sentinels around Windsor Castle are slightly augmented in number; but it will only be necessary here to notice one nightpost, the cloisters of St George's Chapel. This is a somewhat eerie quarter in the small-hours. There is a military tradition to the effect that the cloisters are occasionally visited by shadowy and unearthly forms, to the perturbation of young soldiers. The writer has had no experience of these supernatural visitants; but he has noticed, when marching round the relief, an unusual alacrity on the part of some men to quit the cloisters.

While the men on guard are engaged in their usual routine, the officer is not altogether idle; he inspects and marches off the relieving detachments at intervals of two hours; and in the afternoon visits the sentries, taking pains to ascertain that they are familiar with their instructions. At eleven o'clock at night he makes his 'rounds,' preceded by the drummer-boy with his lantern, as well as by a corporal bearing a bunch of keys, wherewith to open a number of iron gates in and near the castle; and when the rounds return to the lower ward, the captain of the guard is at liberty to retire for the night.

In the morning, such members of the guard as may be slumbering are roused by the arrival of the cooking-party; and soon afterwards the officer's man, with his portmanteau, appears on the scene. Before long, a sergeant comes forth from the 'bunk,' uttering the mandate: 'Get these coats folded.' During the period when the equipments are

being operated upon, the senior sergeant is engaged on the ‘guard report.’ One important part of this is already in print upon the form, and it commences by saying that ‘Nothing extraordinary has occurred during my tour of duty.’ When the sergeant has carefully finished the report, he takes it to the officer for signature, and on his return calls out: ‘Fall-in the guard.’ The men, who are already fully accoutred, promptly form-up outside the guardroom; and the commandant is seen descending the stair from his quarters. Then the ‘new’ guard arrives. In the course of half an hour, the first stroke bestowed by the big-drummer on his instrument announces to the ‘old’ guard that their tour of duty is at an end.

BY ORDER OF THE LEAGUE.

BY FRED. M. WHITE.

IN TWENTY CHAPTERS.—CHAP. XVII.

WHEN Maxwell came to himself it was broad daylight. He was lying upon a straw mattress in a small room, containing no furniture besides the rude bed; and as he looked up, he could see the rafters, black with dirt and the smoke of ages. The place was partly a house, partly a hut. Gradually, as recollection came back to him, he remembered the events of the previous night, wondering vaguely why he had been selected as a victim for attack, and what brought him here. By the clear sound of voices and the rush of water, he judged himself to be in the country. He had no consciousness of fear, so he rose, and throwing open the heavy door, looked out. Towering away above his head were the snow-capped peaks of mountains, and below him the spreading valley of the Campagna. Wood upon wood was piled up before him, all aglow with bright sunlight, the green leaves whispering and trembling in the breeze. The hut was built on a long rocky plateau, approached by a narrow winding path, and ending in a steep precipice of two hundred feet, and backed up behind by almost perpendicular rocks, fringed and crowned by trees. In spite of his position, Maxwell drew a long breath of delight; the perfect beauty of the scene thrilled him, and appealed to his artistic soul and love of the beautiful. For some time he gazed upon the panorama, perfectly oblivious to his position, till gradually the sound of voices borne upon the wind came to his ears. He walked to the side of the hut and looked around.

Seated upon the short springy turf, in every picturesque and comfortable position the ingenuity of each could contrive, were four men, evidently, to Maxwell's experienced eye, banditti. They seemed peacefully inclined now, as they lounged there in the bright sunshine smoking, and renewing the everlasting *papilito*, without which no such gentry are complete, either in the pages of fiction or as portrayed upon the modern stage. With the exception of one, evidently the

leader, there was nothing gorgeous in their costume, it being the usual attire of the mountaineers; but the long carabines lying by their sides and the short daggers in their waistbands spoke of their occupation. Maxwell began to scent an adventure and enjoy the feeling; it would only mean the outlay of a few pounds, a little captivity; but when he approached nearer, and saw each bearing on some part of his person the gold moidore, his heart beat a trifle faster as he stepped forward and confronted the group.

'What is the meaning of this?' he asked, in the best Italian at his command. 'I suppose it is merely a question of ransom. But it is useless to put the figure too high. Come, what is the amount?'

The brigands looked to each other in admiration of this coolness. Presently, the leader removed his cigarette from his mouth and spoke: 'You have your watch, signor, and papers; you have your rings and purse. It is not our rule to forget these with an ordinary prisoner.'

Maxwell felt in his pocket, and, surely enough, his valuables were perfectly safe—nothing missing, even to his sketch-book. For the first time, he began to experience a sensation of fear. 'Then, if plunder is not your object, why am I detained?'

'Plunder is not a nice word to ears polite, signor,' the leader replied with a dark scowl. 'You are detained by orders. To hear, with us, is to obey. You will remain here during our pleasure.'

'But suppose I refuse to remain?'

Without rising, the brigand turned on his side and pointed towards the sheer precipice, and then to the wall behind; with a gesture he indicated the narrow winding path, the only means of exit, and smiled ironically. 'You may go; there is nothing to prevent you,' he said; 'but before you were half-way down the path yonder, you would be the target for a score of bullets, and we do not often fail.'

Maxwell was considerably impressed by this cool display; and indeed, when he considered the matter calmly, there appeared no prospect of immediate escape. Remonstrances or threats would be equally unavailing, and he determined to make the best of his position. 'Perhaps you would not mind telling me why I am here, and by whose orders you have arrested me. It would be some slight consolation to know how long I am to stay. I am anxious to know this,' he continued, 'because I am afraid your mountain air, exhilarating as it is, will not

suit me.'

The group burst into loud laughter at this little humour: it was a kind of wit they were in a position to appreciate.

'It is impossible to say, signor. We only obey orders; we can only wait for further instructions as regards your welfare—or otherwise. We were told to bring one Maxwell here, and lo! we have done it.'

'I see you are brothers of the League,' Maxwell replied; 'and for some act of omission or commission I am detained here. You can at least tell me by whose orders you do this.'

'Signor, they say you are a traitor to our Order.'

'That I am not!' Maxwell cried indignantly. 'Tell me why I am here, and at whose orders. There is some mistake here.'

'Not on our part, signor. The instructions came from London. I only received them last night. You will be well treated here, provided you do not make any attempts to escape. For the time, you are our guest, and as such, the best I have is at your disposal. If orders come to release you, we shall conduct you to Rome. We shall do everything in our power to serve you. If, on the other hand, you are tried in the balance and found wanting, we shall not fail to do our duty.' He said these last words sternly, in contrast to the polite, grave manner with which he uttered the first part of his speech.

Maxwell had perception enough to comprehend his meaning. 'You mean that I should have to die,' he observed. 'I suppose it would be a matter of the utmost indifference to you, either way?'

'As a matter of duty, signor, yes,' he answered gravely; 'though I do not wish to see a brave man die; but if the mandate came to that effect, I must obey. There is no refusing the word of the League.'

'Then I really am a prisoner of the League,' Maxwell returned bitterly. 'Well, the cause of liberty must be in a bad way, when the very members of the League treat brothers as I have been treated.'

'Ah, it is a fine word liberty,' the brigand chief replied sardonically. 'It is a good phrase to put into men's mouths; but there can be no freedom where the shadow of the sword dwells upon the land. Even Italy herself has suffered, as she will again. Perfect liberty and perfect freedom can only be founded upon the doctrine of universal love.'

By this time, Maxwell and the chief had drawn a little aside from the others. The artist looked in his companion's face, and noted the air of sorrow there. It was a fine manly countenance, haughty and handsome, though the dark eyes were somewhat sombre now. Maxwell, with his cosmopolitan instinct, was drawn towards this man, who had a history written on his brow. 'You, too, have suffered,' he said gently.

'Suffered!' the brigand echoed. 'Yes, Englishman, I have suffered, and not more from the Austrian yoke than the cruelties of my own countrymen. There will be no true liberty here while a stiletto remains in an Italian's belt.'

'I suppose not,' Maxwell mused. 'These Societies seem to me a gigantic farce. Would that I had remained quietly at home, and let empires manage their own affairs. And Salvarini warned me too.'

'Salvarini! What do you know of him?' the chief exclaimed.

'Nothing but what is good and noble, everything to make one proud to call him friend.—Do you know him too?'

'He is my brother,' the chief replied quietly.—'You look surprised to find that a relative of Luigi should pursue such a profession as mine. Yes, he is my brother—the brother of an outlaw, upon whose head a price has been put by the state. I am known to men as Paulo Lucci.'

Maxwell started. The man sitting calmly by his side was the most famous and daring bandit chief of his time. Provinces rang with his fame, and the stories of his dashing exploits resounded far and near. Even away in the distant Apennines, the villagers sat round the winter firesides and discoursed of this man with bated breath, and children trembled in their beds at the mere thought of his name. He laughed scornfully now as he noted Maxwell's startled look.

'I am so very terrible,' he continued, 'that my very name strikes terror to you! Bah! you have been listening to the old women's tales of my atrocities, about the tortures my victims undergo, and the thousand-and-one lies people are fond of telling about me. I can understand Luigi did not tell you I was his brother; I am not a relative to be proud of.'

'He is in total ignorance of your identity. That I do know.—I wonder at you choosing such a life,' Maxwell put in boldly. 'With your daring, you would have made fame as a soldier; any path of life you had

chosen would have brought you honour; but now'——

'But now I am an outlaw,' Paulo Salvarini interrupted. 'And why? If you will listen, I will tell you my story in a few words.'

Maxwell threw himself upon the grass by the other's side and composed himself to listen.

'If you will look below you,' the chief commenced, and pointing with his finger across the distant landscape, 'you will see the sun shining upon a house-top. I can see the light reflected from it now. That house was once my home. I like sometimes to sit here and think of those days when Gillana and I were happy there—that is ten years ago now. I had done my best for my country; I had fought for her, and I retired to this peaceful spot with the woman of my heart, to live in peace, as I hoped, for the rest of my life. But the fiend of Liberty was abroad. My wife's father, an aged man, was accused of complicity in political crimes, and one day, when I was absent, they came to arrest him. My wife clung to him, and one of the brutal soldiery struck her down with the butt of his rifle; I came in time to see that, for my blood was on fire, and I did not hesitate. You can understand the rest. My wife was killed, actually murdered by that foul blow. But I had my revenge. When I crossed the threshold of my house, on my flight to the mountains, I left three dead behind me, and another, the officer, wounded sore. He recovered, I afterwards heard; but some day we shall meet.'

He stopped abruptly, shaking in every limb from the violence of his emotion, his sombre eyes turned towards the spot where the sun shone upon the roof-tops of what was once a peaceful homestead.

'Luigi can only guess at this,' the speaker continued. 'To him I have been dead for years; indeed, I do not know what makes me tell you now, only that you surprised me, and I like to hear a little news of him.'

'I have heard this history before,' Maxwell observed. 'It is five years ago now; but I am not likely to forget it. Still, you cannot enjoy this life. It is wild and exciting, no doubt; but your companions'——

'I live for revenge,' Salvarini exclaimed sternly. 'I am waiting to meet the brutal officer who ordered his follower to strike down my wife. I have waited long; but the time will come at length, and then, heaven help the man called Hector le Gautier!'

‘Le Gautier!’ Maxwell exclaimed. ‘He, an Italian officer! Why, he is at present Head Centre of the Brotherhood in London. He and your brethren are bosom friends. He was even present at the time when Luigi told us your sad history. Surely he cannot know; and yet I trusted him too. Signor Salvarini, you bewilder me.’

The outlaw laughed loud and long; but the mirth was strained, and jarred harshly upon the listener. ‘And that fiend is a friend of Luigi’s! Strange things happen in these times. Beware, Signor Maxwell—beware of that man, for he will work you mischief yet. It was by his orders you were arrested. He knows me by name, and as one of the Brotherhood only, so I did his bidding.’

‘Strange! And yet I have done him no harm.’

‘Not that you are aware of, perhaps. Still, no doubt you have crossed his path in some way. If I have a command in the morning to lead you out yonder to face a dozen rifles, I shall not be surprised.’

‘And you would countenance such murder?’

‘This morning, yes. Now, I am doubtful. You are my brother’s friend; I am Le Gautier’s enemy; I do not wish to help him.’

Three days passed uneventfully by, at the end of which time Maxwell had become a great favourite with the outlaw band. Following the lead of their chief, they treated him with every kindness; nor was he in his turn inclined to resent his captivity or chafe at this delay. His chief fear was for Enid; for Paulo Salvarini, though he was inclined to allow his prisoner every latitude, was firm upon the point of communication with the outer world; for, as he pointed out, he might after all be guilty of some great treachery to the League, and in that case must be answerable for anything that happened.

So the days passed on in that quiet spot, no further news coming to him till the morning of the fourth day. Then he was sitting at the door of his hut, watching the sunrise glowing on the distant hills, when Salvarini approached him, his face perturbed, and his whole manner agitated. ‘You are in danger,’ he whispered. ‘The orders have come, and you are proclaimed traitor. The men are mad against you, and declare you shall be brought out for instant execution. Ah! you have only seen the best side of their character; you have not seen them hungry for blood.’

‘Do they want to murder me?’ Maxwell exclaimed. ‘Cannot you’——

‘I am powerless now,’ Salvarini interrupted. ‘I will do what I can; but I fear nothing can save you now.’

‘Do not be afraid,’ said a calm voice behind. ‘*I* shall save him!’

‘Isodore!’

‘Yes, Paulo Lucci; it is I.’

Maxwell looked up, and saw the most beautiful woman he had ever seen in his life. For a moment he could only gaze in rapt astonishment. This, then, was the Empress of the League—the woman Visci had mentioned, whose lightest word could free his feet and clear his path for ever.

‘You have come in time,’ Salvarini said with a low obeisance. ‘An hour hence and our prisoner would have been no more.’

‘I am always in time,’ Isodore replied quietly.—‘I have come to deliver you from a great danger,’ she continued, turning to Maxwell. ‘Come; we must be in Rome at once, and away, or we may yet be too late. Hark! Are the wolves clamouring for their prey already? We shall see.’

It was light now, and from the plateau beyond came the hoarse yells and cries for revenge from the brigands. On they came towards the hut, clamouring for blood, and mad with the heat of passion. They rushed in, seized Maxwell, and led him out on to the level grass, while six of the party stepped back a few paces and cocked their rifles. The whole thing was so sudden that Lucci and Isodore were totally unprepared to resist. But the girl roused herself now, and quitting the hut, swept across the open space and placed herself in front of Maxwell.

‘Drop your arms!’ she cried. ‘Are you mad, that you do this thing? Ground your rifles, or you shall pay dearly for this indignity.’

Appalled by her gestures and the dignity of her voice, the desperadoes hesitated for a moment, and then one, more daring than the rest, raised his carabine to the shoulder, standing in the act of firing.

‘You may fire,’ Isodore cried. ‘Fire! and every hair of my head shall be avenged for by a life! Fire! and then pray for the mercy of heaven, for you shall not meet with any from the hand of man!’

The desperate men were amazed by this beauty and daring, the audacity of which appealed to their rude instinct. One by one they

dropped their firearms, and stood looking sullenly in the direction of the scornful woman, standing there without a particle of fear in her eyes.

‘Who are you,’ cried one bolder than the rest—‘who are you, that come between us and justice?’

They all took up the cry, and bade her stand aside.

‘If she falls, I fall!’ Lucci exclaimed in a firm steady voice. ‘Go on your knees, and ask for pardon.—Madam,’ he continued, falling upon one knee, ‘I did not think my followers would have shown such scant courtesy to Isodore.’

At the very mention of her name, a change came over the mutineers. One by one they dropped their firearms, and came forward humbly to implore her forgiveness for their rashness, but she waved them aside.

Long and earnestly the three talked together, listening to the revelation of Le Gautier’s treachery, and how the final act was about to be played over there in England: how Le Gautier had confessed his treachery, and how, out of his own mouth, he was going to be convicted. Silently and slowly they wound their way down the mountain path, under Lucci’s guidance, out on to the plains, beyond which the sun lighted upon the house-tops of distant Rome. When they had got so far, Isodore held out her hand to the guide.

‘Good-bye. It will not be safe for you to come any farther,’ she said. ‘Rest assured, in the general reckoning your account shall not be forgotten.’

‘It will not,’ Lucci answered sternly. ‘I shall see to that myself. By the time you reach England, I shall be there too.—Nay, do not strive to dissuade me. I do not take my revenge from another hand. I shall run a great risk; but, mark me, when the time comes, I shall be there!’ Without another word he disappeared; and Isodore and Maxwell walked on towards the Eternal City both wrapped in their own thoughts. Mile after mile passed on thus, ere Maxwell broke the silence.

‘Do you think he will keep his word?’ he said half timidly.

‘Who, Lucci? Yes; he will keep his word; nothing but death will prevent that.—And now, you and I must get back to England without a moment’s loss of time.’

‘I cannot say how grateful I am,’ Maxwell said earnestly. ‘If it had not been for your bravery and courage’—— He stopped and shuddered; the contemplation of what might have been was horrible.

Isodore smiled a little unsteadily in answer to these words. ‘I owe you a debt of gratitude,’ she replied. ‘My memory serves me well. I was not going to allow you to die, when you would have perished rather than raise a hand against Carlo Visci.’

‘Indeed, you only do me justice. I would have died first.’

‘I know it; and I thank you for your kindness to him at the last. You were with him when he died. Things could not have been better. He was always fond of you. For that, I am grateful.’

‘But I do not understand,’ Maxwell faltered. ‘He did not know you except by reputation.’

‘I think you are mistaken. Am I so changed that you do not recognise your friend Genevieve?’

‘Genevieve! You? Am I dreaming?’

‘Yes; I am Genevieve; though much changed and altered from those happy old days when you used to come to the Villa Mattio. You wonder why I am here now—why I left my home. Cannot you guess that Le Gautier was at the bottom of it?’

‘But he professed not to know you; he’——

‘Yes, he professed to be a friend of yours. But until I give you permission to speak, not a word that Isodore and Genevieve are one and the same.’

‘My lips are sealed. I leave everything in your hands.’

‘And cannot you guess why you have incurred Le Gautier’s enmity?—No? Simply, because he aspires to the hand of Enid Charteris.—You need not start,’ Isodore continued, laying her hand upon the listener’s arm. ‘You have no cause for anxiety. It will never be!’

‘Never, while I can prevent it!’ Maxwell cried warmly.

‘It is impossible. He has a wife already.’

Only tarrying for one mournful hour to visit the cemetery where lay Carlo Visci’s quiet grave, Isodore and Maxwell made their way, but not together, to England, as fast as steam could carry them.

THE ORDNANCE SURVEY, ITS PAST AND FUTURE.

THE Ordnance Survey is now a hundred years old, and it is expected, according to present arrangements, to be finished in 1890. That, in one sense, is a considerable time to look forward to; but there are several knotty and important questions connected with the completion of this great scientific enterprise which it would be well duly to weigh and consider beforehand. A suitable opportunity for calling attention to the results of this national undertaking is afforded by the publication of a popularly written volume, *The Ordnance Survey of the United Kingdom* (Blackwood & Sons), by Lieutenant-Colonel T. P. White of the Royal Engineers, the executive officer of the Survey. An additional reason for noticing the matter at this stage may also be found in the amount of ignorance which prevails on the subject. To most persons, the Ordnance Survey only means some kind of measuring of the land; but they have little idea of the methods adopted for the purpose, of the multifarious ends served by the publication of the maps, of the difficulties which had to be overcome, and of the marvellous and unexampled accuracy with which the work has been carried on. There are indeed few things of which as a nation we may feel more proud than the accomplishment of this gigantic work; a noble illustration and monument of persistent perseverance, of infinite ingenuity of resource, and of general engineering skill.

A beginning was made, according to Colonel White, with the primary triangulation for the Survey in 1784 (the Annual Report says 1791), under the charge of General Roy, an able scientific officer, who had been associated with General Watson, thirty-six years before, in a survey of the Highlands made for military reasons, after the crushing of the rebellion of 1745. The idea of a scientific survey of the whole kingdom was first mooted in 1763; but for various reasons, nothing was done till twenty-one years later, when, in response to a proposal from the French government to connect the system of triangulation already existing in France with that about to be set on foot here, the work was at last begun. Hounslow Heath was selected as the base-line of that great system which has now overspread the land. It may not be

unnecessary here to remark that the work of a cadastral survey is carried on by a series of triangles proceeding from a base-line—that is, a space of level ground usually about five miles long, which is measured by chain in the most exact manner—this forming the nucleus. From the two ends of this measured space a triangle is formed to some point at a distance, and the length of the two unknown sides computed by trigonometry. From this primary triangle, other triangles are formed, and calculated similarly, until there is a series of these like a network all over the country. Four or five other base-lines were also measured for verifying the correctness of the calculations—hence called 'bases of verification'—notably that on Salisbury Plain, on which as a foundation the principal triangulation of the kingdom was eventually to rest.

It forms a remarkable illustration of the care and exactness with which the work has been done that the lengths of these base-lines calculated from the original one by trigonometry through all the intervening triangles, has been found to coincide within four inches with the lengths as actually measured by chain. A result like this reminds one of the yearly balancing by the system of double entry of the transactions of a great bank with branches all over the country, and where the totals on both sides, amounting to many millions, square to a farthing. These primary triangles, some of them containing sides one hundred miles long, are broken up into smaller ones, and these again subdivided; the latter, with sides from one to two miles, being then measured in the ordinary way by the surveyors. We have thus, from one or two measured spaces—it might be from one only—a triangulation worked out of the whole country, and its area and the relative geographical position of every spot on its surface fixed for all time. This principal triangulation, as it is called, was completed in 1852. What has been going on since is survey work.

The battle of the scales is another noteworthy point in the history of the Survey. When it was resolved, about the close of the last century, to publish maps based on the triangulation, the scale of one inch to a mile was adopted, and this embraced all England and Wales south of Yorkshire and Lancashire, these two counties being surveyed about 1840 on the six-inch scale, which had been adopted for the Irish Survey, and was now introduced into England. Afterwards, the scale was enlarged to twenty-five inches to a mile, and the four northern counties of England were so surveyed and published. It was then

agreed to re-survey all those counties which had been done on the one-inch system. Some of these are completed, while others are still in progress.

In Scotland, the course of the Survey has not run very smoothly. The triangulatory work was begun in 1809, and went on with intermissions till 1823, when it was stopped for fifteen years, to allow the Irish Survey to be taken up. The latter was begun in 1824, and finished in 1842. But six-inch county maps have now been published of the whole of Scotland, one-inch maps of nearly the whole, and those on the twenty-five-inch scale also, with the exception of Midlothian, Fife, Haddington, Kinross, Kirkcudbright, Wigtown, which had been the earliest surveyed, and were completed before the larger scale was sanctioned. The uncultivated portions of Scotland, it may be added, are also excepted from the larger scale. These six counties, and Yorkshire and Lancashire, are thus the only counties in Great Britain whose maps are not published on the twenty-five-inch scale. Towns with populations over four thousand have been surveyed on a still larger scale, varying from one-five-hundredth, or a hundred and twenty-six inches to the mile, to one-ten-hundred and fifty-sixth, or about sixty inches to the mile. Edinburgh and thirteen other towns are done on the smaller scale, and forty-four other towns on the larger. In any future revision of the Survey, those towns and counties which have not been published on the larger scales will probably have priority.

It is needless to add that great delay and vexatious hindrance to the general efficiency and progress of the Survey have been caused by the vacillation and frequent changes made at the instance of the House of Commons. One session it would be in a liberal mood, and rule that the Survey should be carried on with all speed and on the most liberal scale; and at another it would rescind its good resolutions and pass others of a more economical kind. In 1851, for example, a Committee of the House of Commons, with the present Earl of Wemyss at their head, recommended that the six-inch scale in Scotland should be discontinued and the one-inch maps only published. Much dissatisfaction was felt in Scotland at this retrograde recommendation, and remonstrances from all quarters poured in to the Treasury on the subject. Three years afterwards, the twenty-five-inch scale was approved of; but an adverse vote was carried in the House of Commons two years later; and the question was not put to rest till

1861, when the latter scale was finally sanctioned; and since then, as Colonel White remarks, ‘parliamentary committees have troubled us no more.’ A recommendation to accelerate the progress of the Survey was made in 1880; and in the following year the working force was nearly doubled. As a result of this arrangement, it is expected that the work will be completed in 1890; this is on the supposition that the present numbers and organisation are kept up. From the last Annual Report, we learn that on the 31st of December 1885, there were employed 28 officers, 2 warrant-officers, 364 non-commissioned officers and sappers of the Royal Engineers, and 2846 civilians—total, 3240. This, presumably, includes all those connected with the production and publication of the maps at Southampton, the headquarters of the Survey.

Of the inestimable benefit to the nation at large of the Ordnance Survey there can be but one opinion among all persons capable of forming an intelligent opinion. It has proved of great value in a large number of matters of the highest public interest. Its necessity and importance in connection with the national defences are perhaps of primary interest; but there are numerous other departments where it has proved equally essential, such as for valuation purposes—facilitating the taking of the census; for drainage, waterworks, railways, and engineering works generally; for extension of town boundaries, and surveys for various purposes. As a practical example of the public advantage derived from the Ordnance Survey, Colonel White mentions that during the progress of the Redistribution of Seats Bill the enormous number of four hundred and fifty-three thousand maps were required for the Boundary Commissioners; and special duties of a similar kind were also rendered in 1868, and also to the Irish Church Temporalities Commission. These and other services of a more strictly scientific nature, as those rendered to geodesy and geology, afford ample testimony to the value of the labours of those engaged in this arduous and honourable service.

The all-important question remains, how are we to carry on this confessedly important work? We must not lose the benefit of what, through great toil and cost, has been already achieved. Valuable as have been the results, it is evident that many portions of the Survey are now obsolete. The triangulation portion of the work has of course been done once for all; but in a very large number of cases, especially in the suburbs of towns, the whole face of the country is changed.

There are hundreds of districts which are presented in the Survey sheets as green fields, surrounded with trees and hedgerows, where now are densely populated towns or parts of towns. The hills and the rivers remain, but all else is changed. Glebe-lands, residential estates, farm-steadings have become streets and lanes, or perhaps have succumbed to the operations of the miner, or afforded space for a great industry of some sort. It is obvious, then, that the Survey, unequalled, it is believed, in any other country, should undergo periodical revision in order to keep pace with the progress of the nation, otherwise we shall find ourselves unable to cope satisfactorily with many questions and difficulties arising from time to time in a great country like our own. How, for instance, would the Boundary Commissioners in the instance already mentioned have performed their duties had there been no accurate survey of the country? And in the war-scare of 1858-9, Colonel White mentions that a great expense was incurred by the government of the day in getting special surveys of large districts hastily made, as at that time the twenty-five-inch scale was just begun; and it would have been still more had there been no force ready to undertake the duty. Imperfectly, then, as the case has been here stated, there is sufficient, we think, to demonstrate that there is a strong plea for a deliberate and favourable consideration of this important matter at no distant date.

It only remains to make acknowledgment to Colonel White for the use here made of many of the facts in his interesting volume. To those who feel any interest in the subject, and even to those who do not, his story of the labours of his comrades is worthy, in literary and other respects, of all commendation, and we venture to say will do much to popularise the subject.

WANTED, A CLUE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

"'COMPANION required for a Young Lady. Must be cheerful, musical, and of good family. Salary, £60 per annum.'" Such was the advertisement my aunt Margaret read out to me one morning, as we sat at breakfast in her neat little house in London.

I am the orphan daughter of a missionary, and my aunt's was the only home I had ever known. For the past three years I had been resident governess in a wealthy family in Yorkshire; but my employers' purse-proud arrogance was too much for my self-respect, and I had to leave, resolving if possible to try and obtain a post as companion.

Tempted by the excellent salary offered, I at once wrote to the address indicated. Promptly I received a reply, from Mr Foster of Great Gorton Hall, Westernshire. He stated that companionship was required for his step-daughter, Miss Thorndyke, a delicate girl of eighteen, who resided with him and his widowed sister, Mrs Morrell; her mother, his dear late wife, having died the previous year. He added that my acquirements and credentials were satisfactory; and requested to know whether I had ever been in Westernshire, and if I had any friends or connections there.

I replied that I was an entire stranger to the county and to all the people in it; and in a few days I was overjoyed at receiving the nomination to the post; for I was unwilling to be a burden on my aunt's slender means.

Gorton Hall was a fine building of gray stone, standing in beautiful grounds, on the outskirts of a pretty country village. I was shown into a spacious drawing-room, where a middle-aged lady in black greeted me very pleasantly, introducing herself as Mrs Morrell. She kindly bade me be seated, and sent a servant in search of her brother.

Mr Foster was a fine-looking man, with iron-gray hair, and a keen and searching expression—a man whom I instinctively felt it would be dangerous to offend. His manner to me, like his sister's, was courtesy

itself. He explained the duties expected from me. ‘And one thing more I must add, Miss Armitage,’ he said in conclusion—‘although willing to concede everything reasonable, there is one thing I cannot permit in members of my household—gossiping with strangers concerning my family. I prefer that my daughter’s companion should have no friends or acquaintances in this neighbourhood; and I must request that during your residence here, you discourage any intimacy which people at Gorton or any of the neighbouring villages may seek to establish with you. I have seen so much mischief caused by gossip and tittle-tattle, that I am obliged to request this.’

The stipulation seemed a very reasonable one, and I readily acceded to it. Mr Foster then went on to speak of his step-daughter.

‘Our darling Edith is not so strong as we could wish, and indeed is frequently confined to the sofa. The doctor orders her to keep early hours and avoid all excitement; she therefore goes but little into society; but we hope the companionship of a bright and lively girl will prove beneficial. Keep her amused and happy, Miss Armitage, and we ask no more from you.’

I found my future charge in the drawing-room, when I descended dressed for dinner. She was a fragile-looking creature, with light hair and large blue eyes. She greeted me very kindly. Her manner was childish, considering her age; but I was much relieved not to find her a fine fashionable young lady. She was still in mourning for her mother.

We had a musical evening. Mrs Morrell and I executed several duets on the piano, accompanied by Mr Foster on the violin, which he played very well. Edith kissed me very kindly as she said good-night; and before I went to rest, I sat down and wrote to my aunt in glowing terms, saying that Gorton Hall was an earthly paradise.

Nor did I see reason to change my opinion for many weeks. I soon felt perfectly at ease in my new home. Edith was so gentle, so unassuming, and so considerate, that it was impossible not to love her; and Mr Foster and his sister were most kind. I was treated as a gentlewoman and an equal; and my duties were very light, being chiefly to drive Edith in a pretty pony-carriage, to play duets, and occasionally to read aloud.

We did not mix very much in society, although Mrs Morrell received a

due amount of calls from the ladies in the neighbourhood. A few quiet garden-parties and dinners were the limit of our dissipations, on Edith's account. I was always included in any scheme of pleasure, and Mr Foster made quite a point of introducing me to all visitors.

There was a fine old church in the village, to which we all went on Sundays. It was a mile and a half across the fields; but we usually drove, on account of Edith. I had been nearly six months at the Hall, when one fine Sunday morning in July it fell to my lot to go to church alone, for the first time since my arrival. Mr Foster was in London; Edith had a headache; and Mrs Morrell would not leave her, although she was urgent that I should go. The service over, I was returning across the first field, when I heard steps behind me, and a gentleman's voice said: 'Miss Armitage!'

I turned round in surprise, to see a young man who was a perfect stranger to me. Lifting his hat politely, he begged for the honour of a few words with me.

I was both amazed and indignant, and somewhat loftily informed him that I was not in the habit of conversing with total strangers; so saying, I was walking on, when he interrupted me, and begged me to listen, for Edith Thorndyke's sake.

'My father, Dr Archer, was her father's oldest friend, Miss Armitage. My family is well known in this neighbourhood; and I live in the next village, Little Gorton, where I am in partnership with Dr Selby. You are well known to me by name, and for some time I have endeavoured to contrive an interview with you, in vain. I could not come up to the Hall,' he added, no doubt seeing amazement written on my face. 'The fact is, Miss Armitage, I love Edith Thorndyke; but her step-father considers my position inferior to hers, and refuses to allow me to see her until she is of age. Doubtless you are aware that she will inherit a great deal of property.'

'I strongly disapprove of discussing these family matters with a total stranger, sir,' I said, trying to move away. 'Also, Mr Foster has absolutely forbidden it.—Good-morning.'

'One moment!' he pleaded. 'Edith Thorndyke's very life may depend upon it! Have you heard the terms of her mother's will?'

'They are nothing to me, sir.'

'Oh, but please, Miss Armitage! I entreat you! Do listen to me! When

Mrs Foster's first husband died, he left her some thousands a year, in addition to Gorton Hall and the estates, entirely at her own disposal. She married again, and died last year, when it was found that she had left her husband Edith's sole guardian until she should be twenty-one, when she would enter into the possession of the Thorndyke property. In case she died before attaining her majority, one half of the property would devolve upon Mr Foster, and half upon relatives of the Thorndykes. Even the half is a very large sum, Miss Armitage—quite enough to tempt a man like Mr Foster to—to—— In short, I sadly fear Edith Thorndyke will not be allowed to live until she is twenty-one.'

'This is downright madness!' I exclaimed. 'Mr Foster is the kindest and best of men—quite incapable of harbouring designs upon his step-daughter's life.'

'I know Lawrence Foster; you do not,' he answered quietly. 'I know him to be bold and cunning and unscrupulous. Edith believes in him and his sister; but she is sadly deceived. I hoped to be able to enlist you on my side, Miss Armitage, when I heard of your arrival at the Hall. I should be glad to feel sure that Edith has one disinterested friend in the house.'

'But I ought not to speak to you at all,' I said, feeling very uncomfortable. 'Mr Foster has strictly forbidden me to gossip with strangers.'

'Because he is afraid that you might hear the truth.'

'But if he is what you say, why does he have a companion for his step-daughter at all? I must be a check on his movements. I see all that goes on; he never hides anything from me.'

'Don't you see that your presence is an additional security for him? It disarms suspicion. Supposing Edith—well, died suddenly; people would say: "Miss Armitage was there; she knows all about it;" and no comment would be excited; whereas it would probably seem suspicious, at all events to the Thorndyke family, who are by no means satisfied with the terms of the will, if Edith were to die whilst living alone with Mr Foster and his sister. There can be no doubt that the money must be an immense temptation to him. He has nothing of his own. Ten thousand a year, and only one fragile girl's life in the way!'

I must say the speaker's earnestness and unmistakable sincerity began

to make an impression upon me. I had fancied once or twice that Mr Foster exercised an unusually close surveillance over Edith and me. Were Dr Archer's words true, and was I merely a lay-figure at Gorton Hall, to deceive the world? Had I been taken into society by my employers, and my praises trumpeted forth to all their acquaintances, merely in order that my presence should disarm suspicion? 'You have made me very uncomfortable,' I candidly confessed.

'Believe me, Miss Armitage, I would not have taken this course but that I was compelled by necessity. Edith's step-father has such a complete ascendency over her, that it is difficult to know what to do. But you are always with her, and can watch over her.'

'But I am only a paid companion, liable to dismissal at any time.'

'True; but I hope you will try and stay as long as you can, for Edith's sake.'

'I fear she is very delicate.'

'She is delicate; she needs care. But, as she gets older, her health will probably improve. There is really no reason, humanly speaking, why she should not live for many years. But I fear—I fear many things, but chiefly poison, slow and secret. Mr Foster is an accomplished chemist; and his antecedents—better known to me than to most people—give me little confidence in him. If you knew as much as I do about him, Miss Armitage, you would not wonder at my suspicions. But be sure of this: there is danger. I have no proof against Mr Foster, and therefore cannot interfere in any way. Promise, promise me, Miss Armitage, that you will inform me of everything suspicious that you may see from this time. Here is my address.'

I hastily took the proffered card and gave the promise, anxious to return before Mrs Morrell should be uneasy at my absence. She laughingly remarked that the sermon must have been unusually long, and in a casual manner asked what was the text. Luckily, I was able to supply chapter and verse and a lengthy catalogue of my fellow-worshippers. It then struck me for the first time that if, by chance, I was allowed to go out alone, either Mr Foster or Mrs Morrell might find out, by skilfully put questions, everything I had said, seen, and done.

Now that suspicion had once entered my mind, I saw grounds for it everywhere, as might have been expected. The most absurd fancies

entered into my head. I persuaded Edith in secret to lock her door at night before retiring to rest, which she had never done before. I do not know what I expected to happen. The precaution was a senseless one; for the foes I was fighting against were far too clever and subtle to contemplate anything so foolish as commonplace midnight murder.

I will do my employers the justice to say that with all this I spent a delightful summer. They took Edith and me to Scotland for a two months' tour; and I never enjoyed a holiday so much. A more charming cicerone than Mr Foster could not be. Then we went back to Gorton, and settled down for the winter. For some time, absolutely nothing of any importance occurred. I wrote occasionally a brief, reassuring, cautious note to Dr Archer, but carefully refrained from speaking when we met, to avert suspicion. Edith and I grew daily more attached; and nothing could exceed my employers' kindness.

Edith had been decidedly better in health, until she received a severe chill in November. Mrs Morrell at once sent for the doctor, the same old family practitioner who had attended her from her birth.

Dr Stevens was a worthy man, and once a skilful physician, no doubt; but when I saw him, he was nearly eighty and quite past his work. Feeble, weak in sight and hearing, the old man seemed more fit to be in bed himself, than to be employed in his professional capacity. I hinted as much to Edith; but she was quite indignant, and reiterated her assurances that she had more confidence in Dr Stevens than in any one else; so I had to rest satisfied.

Miss Thorndyke's illness dragged on with fluctuating strength. She was too delicate to shake off anything easily; and she had frequent relapses, which sadly weakened her strength. Mrs Morrell nursed her most assiduously, declining professional attendance, but permitting me to help her to the best of my ability. But although I was allowed to be in the invalid's room all day, if I chose, Mrs Morrell would not permit me to exhaust my strength in night-nursing. She had had her bed placed in a dressing-room communicating with Edith's room, and there she slept, ready, at the slightest movement of the invalid, to spring up and wait upon her. Edith spoke warmly of Mrs Morrell's kindness and devotion; and certainly she spared no pains to humour the fancies of the sick girl.

About Christmas, the disease assumed a new phase. Symptoms of stomach derangement set in, which Dr Stevens attributed to the long-

continued recumbent position and lack of exercise; and he set himself to combat the new evil by every means in his power. This was all discussed in my presence, for no mystery was made of the matter; and indeed I was usually accustomed to administer Edith's food and medicines when I sat in her room. This, however, never occurred in the evening; for Mr Foster so pathetically pleaded his loneliness in the deserted drawing-room after dinner, when his sister always went to the invalid, that in common civility I could not refuse to play chess and cribbage with him, and occasionally accompany his violin on the piano.

But one night about nine o'clock I slipped quietly out of the drawing-room, and went up-stairs to Edith's room to see if she was awake. She had been worse that day, and I was beginning to feel rather anxious about her. For a wonder, Mrs Morrell was not on duty, and I entered unchallenged. I had not been into Edith's room so late as this since the beginning of her illness, and was astonished to find it lighted up by eight large wax candles, dispersed about the apartment, although the glare was carefully screened from the invalid's face. I stooped over the thin face on the pillow, and received a faint smile. I could not help remarking: 'How light your room is! I wonder you can sleep in such a blaze.'

'Mrs Morrell likes it,' was the languid answer. 'She always burns eight candles like that, all night. I don't mind them.—O Alice dear, I am so tired of lying here! and I'm always so thirsty, so dreadfully thirsty! Do give me something to drink!'

I poured out a tumblerful of a cooling drink from a handsome red glass jug on the table near me. She drank it eagerly, and sank back on her pillow as Mrs Morrell came into the room.

I fancied that an angry gleam shot at me from under the widow's black eyebrows; but if so, she smoothed away her irritation before she addressed me. 'Alice, my dear, it is most kind of you to be here, but I left my darling girl, as I hoped, to sleep. She is more likely to get a good night's rest, if she is not disturbed by late visitors. After nine o'clock, please, I must request you for the present, dear, not to come here again.'

I apologised, and said good-night, turning, however, at the door to ask if Mrs Morrell did not think so much light might have a disturbing effect upon the invalid.

‘Now, my dear Miss Armitage, that is not like your usual common-sense,’ answered the widow sweetly. ‘Above all things, plenty of light is essential in a sickroom, where medicines have to be accurately measured out, and where at any moment the nurse may be summoned to her patient’s side. I should be tumbling over the furniture in the dark, if the candles were not kept burning. And now, my dear girl, I must really request that you go; Edith is nearly asleep. Good-night.’ So I ran down-stairs, to be gently scolded by Mr Foster for my long absence.

When a week went by and Edith grew worse every day, I became seriously alarmed, and expressed my uneasiness in a letter to Dr Archer, which I posted myself, for fear of accidents. He sent me a brief note by a trusty messenger, in reply, which did not tend to allay my fears:

‘Your account of her symptoms was most alarming. You say she is wasted and prostrate, and suffers from painful cramps and insatiable thirst. These are the symptoms of arsenical poisoning. You must contrive to secure portions of all her food and medicine, and bottle them securely, and bring them to me. Be in the fir plantation at four o’clock to-morrow to meet me; it is a matter of life and death.’

You may imagine how terrified I was; but luckily I had nerve enough to hide it. I looked out all the small bottles I could find, washed them out carefully, and determined to put them into my pocket one at a time, to fill as occasion should serve. At the same time I could hardly believe that Dr Archer was right in his suspicions. I believed they could not poison Edith without my knowledge. I was in and out of the sickroom all day, from about ten o’clock in the morning, until I was dismissed at five to dress for dinner; and at least half of her food and medicine I administered with my own hands. The medicine bottles I frequently opened fresh from Dr Stevens’ wrappings; and it was difficult to imagine that poison could get into puddings and jellies brought straight from the kitchen to the bedside. I could only conclude that at night must occur Mrs Morrell’s opportunity—if at all.

I felt like a conspirator, as I contrived to secrete small portions of everything of which Edith partook. I secured the last drops remaining of the cooling drink which Mrs Morrell had had to administer to the invalid during the night; also a portion of the farinaceous pudding which Miss Thorndyke had had for her dinner, a part of her sleeping-

draught, a wine-glassful of the mixture she was taking every two hours, and some of the beef-tea which Dr Stevens had ordered for her. If poison were really being administered, it must be present in one or other of these. I chiefly suspected the remains of the cooling drink. I was young and unsophisticated, and my experience as a novel-reader made me believe it quite possible that Mrs Morrell should carry small packets of arsenic about in her pocket, to mix in Edith's medicines and food, as occasion should serve. I can only smile at my credulity now.

It was a difficult matter to meet Dr Archer in the fir plantation unobserved. Mrs Morrell had first to be evaded, and then Mr Foster, who manifested a most amiable and pressing desire to accompany me in my walk. I dared not linger, but hastily thrust the phials into the young doctor's hands, telling him I particularly suspected the cooling drink. He informed me that he was going to send them at once to an eminent analyst at one of the London hospitals; and that, if they proved to contain poison, he should instantly apply to a magistrate for a warrant.

I could not control my feelings that evening sufficiently well to prevent Mr Foster remarking, as we sat at chess: 'Your walk to-day did not do you much good, Miss Armitage.'

'I have rather a headache,' I hastily answered. It was perfectly true. 'I sat with Edith all the morning, and her room seemed to me very stuffy.' Indeed, I had frequently noticed a strange closeness pervading it, especially when I first entered it in the morning; and I very often found my head the worse for a prolonged sojourn in it.

'As soon as Dr Stevens will allow it, she shall be moved into a larger room,' he answered, as if he wished to evade a discussion of the subject.

SOME ANECDOTES OF AMERICAN CHILDREN.

THE subject of children is one in which every one is more or less interested; for even those who have none of their own were babies themselves in some dim period of the past, and probably most of us have wondered at times what sort of babies we were. Happy they who have it on the authority of those who ought to know, that they were 'well-behaved children'—lumps of good-nature, and never addicted to crying. How kindly does Charles Lamb revert to the days of his childhood, dwelling with something of reverence on the image of that 'young master' whom he could scarcely believe to have been indeed himself, and whose pure memory he cherished as tenderly 'as if it had been a child of some other house,' and not of his parents. So perhaps some of us also have yearned over those little phantoms of the past, our own child-selves.

But it is of American children that we have now a few words to say. Perhaps, however, we make a mistake at the outset in calling them *children* at all, for many of them seem to belong to some species of fairy changelings, so remarkable and almost uncanny is their precocity, and that, too, from the earliest infancy, while they are still in their nurses' arms, or at the bottle. Gilbert's little urchin of the *Bab Ballads* who chucked his nurse under the chin when she fed him, and vowed by the rap it was excellent pap, was nothing to them. They would be too *blasé* for such infantine manifestations as these. We have one of them before our 'mind's eye' now, an ideal-looking little maid, with sunny hair, blue eyes, and rosy cheeks, the youngest darling of a happy household. Being of a wakeful disposition, she was indulged with her bottle at night up to the mature age of nearly two years. Her mother, waking once at midnight, was aware of some disturbance in the cot beside her, where baby seemed to be searching vigorously in the moonlight for something. Hoping the little one might forego her search and drop to sleep, the mother lay quiet, when suddenly baby raised her soft fair head, and with the startling question, 'Where de debil is my mouf-piece?' fairly banished all slumber from her fond parent. It must be explained that this occurred in a part of the country

where children were liable to overhear the talk of negroes, both indoor and outdoor servants; and this race, as represented in the States of America, are evidently of the opinion of the old sea-captain's Scotch wife who, while agreeing with her minister as to the advisability of her husband's giving up the habit of swearing, was yet constrained to acknowledge that 'nae doubt it was still a great set-off to conversation.' Baby's grandmamma, however, on being informed of this last addition to her darling's vocabulary, remarked somewhat grimly that it was about time the bottle should be given up.

The foregoing was scarcely so bad as what a little two-year-old neighbour was guilty of; for on this young scapegrace being mildly remonstrated with for some misdemeanour by his grandfather—a venerable old doctor, of much repute with all who knew him—he retorted, in his half-articulate baby speech, 'Gan-pa, you'se a old fool!'—waking a burst of unhallowed merriment from all within hearing distance.

The propensity on the part of their children to use profane language is a source of great uneasiness to American mothers. One lady, the daughter of a clergyman, who had brought her up on strictly old-fashioned principles, was much distressed to note the habit growing on her only child, a fine manly little boy of four years. At her wits' end for a timely cure, she at last resorted to the expedient of a whipping, threatening, with the most unmistakable air of sincerity, that it would be repeated if ever a certain word were used by him again. The morning after this occurrence, Georgie was, as usual, at his spelling lesson with his mother, the task for the day consisting of a string of words all rhyming with 'am.' The first few of them had been accomplished with praiseworthy accuracy, when suddenly the young student came to a dead-stop. 'Go on, sonny,' said his mother encouragingly, not seeing for the moment where the difficulty lay. 'C-a-m—cam,' repeated Georgie in evident embarrassment, the next word apparently presenting some insurmountable obstacle. 'Go on!' insisted his mother—when, with a sudden blurt, out came the monosyllable 'D-a-m—*dam*, a millpond dam,' added Georgie, the threatened punishment being uppermost in his mind.

The same little boy had a cousin, a year older than himself, and ages ahead of him in knowledge of the world, so much so, that he would sometimes assume the part of mentor towards his more unsophisticated junior. When the two were together one day, the

elder announced his intention of paying a visit to a family living near them. 'But I won't take you with me,' said he. 'Why not?' asked Georgie, disconcerted. 'Because they'll teach you to swear,' returned the other gravely. 'But you go there yourself,' argued little George. 'O yes,' rejoined his senior with a world-worn air; 'I swear already.'

Young America does not take kindly to correction in any form, probably resenting it as an infringement of natural liberties. One little boy having been punished for some childish transgression, astonished his family by coming down suddenly from his room up-stairs with a small bundle under his arm, saying, 'I'm going to leave this blessed house.'

American children are, as a rule, more practical and less imaginative than those of the old country—inclined from the very beginning to look on life as a struggle, though a pleasant one on the whole, and on the world as their oyster, which they, with their sharp-set wits, must open. They bring this matter-of-fact element even into their devotions. A little girl was promised by her father, on his leaving home for a few days, that he would bring dolls for her and her sister when he came back. That night, when at her prayers, she put in the very laudable petition, 'Pray God, bring papa home safely;' but somewhat compromised the effect by adding with great emphasis, after a moment's rapt reflection—'with the dolls.' But this was devotion itself compared with the following. A little mite of a creature running out of her room one morning was called back by her mother: 'Dolly, you haven't said your prayers.' 'I dess Dod tan wait,' returned little Miss Irreverence; 'I'se in a hurry.' In both these cases, the utter unconsciousness of presumption on the part of the tiny speakers took away the effect of profanity from their words.

Reverence is certainly not the strong point of our small kinsfolk across the water. Almost from their entrance into the world, they begin to assume airs of equality with all around them. One sweet little damsel, who was of peculiarly small and fairy-like proportions, could with difficulty be prevailed upon to call her parents otherwise than by their Christian names; and the effect was quaint to hear her, when offered candy or such-like forbidden dainties, refuse them with a wistful look and the words: 'Willie not likes it' (Willie being her father); or, 'Annie' (her mother) 'said no.' Nay, she did not scruple even to call her grandmother by *her* name, as far as she could pronounce it, for 'Margaret' offered some obstacles to the baby lips. You would have

fancied this same little maiden too soft and gentle to brush the down from a butterfly's wing; but on one occasion she shocked the sensibilities of her young cousin, fresh from England, by exclaiming, on an innocent, newly fledged chicken being brought in for the inspection of the family: 'Me have dat pitty bird for my dinner!'

From the youngest age, American children are ready to share—as Wordsworth once expressed it—'in anything going.' A visitor injudiciously offering a little boy some wine at dinner, was requested by his watchful mother not to give him 'too much;' when young Hopeful took the words out of her mouth by protesting with vehement eagerness: 'I *like* too much!'

It is no easy task to impose any restrictions, even of time or place, on one of these little free-born Americans, or to impress them with any sense of restraint or regard of persons. One little daughter of Eve, brought up for baptism at the ripe age of two—episcopal visits being rare in the part of the country where she lived—somewhat scandalised the bishop by calling his attention, just before the ceremony, to her attire, thus: 'Look at my new dess;' and drawing it back to display her dainty feet—'Look, bissop, at my pitty new boots!' The good father took it all in very amiable part, though he remarked to her mother afterwards, that the little one had evidently no intention of giving up the vanities of the world just yet.

But we must say good-bye for the present to our little American cousins, on whom we must not be understood to have cast the shadow of an aspersion. Their intelligence and quickness, indeed, combined with the other charms of infancy—of which they have their full share—make them as attractive, to say the least, as any of their kind. We can assert, moreover, from our own knowledge, that some of these tiny gentry, with whose scarce-conscious childish profanity we have dallied for a while, are growing up at this present moment into decent and in every way excellent members of society.

A STRANGE LOVE AFFAIR.

HECTOR MACKINNON, the hero of the strange story we are about to unfold, a story perhaps unequalled for uniqueness in the annals of love, was a divinity student. He had just completed his fourth year of the Hall, and expected soon to be licensed as a probationer. He was the only son of a wealthy merchant, and had been destined for the ministry from his birth.

Mr Mackinnon, senior, was a prominent and influential adherent of one of our strictest dissenting bodies, and had brought up his son in the belief that there was little else good in the world outside the pale of its communion. There was some mystery about Hector's mother, who had died shortly after giving him birth. Some people whispered that she had been on the stage before she was married, and that Mr Mackinnon had fallen violently in love with her pretty face, and married the young girl while in the ecstasy of his passion, and before the cold dictates of prudence, or the counsel of his friends, could intervene. The marriage had not been, it was said, a happy one. While the magic glamour of love lasted, all went well; when it began to wane, the angular austerities of Mr Mackinnon's disposition became painfully apparent to the young bride. On his part, he looked without sympathy, if not indeed with positive contempt, on what he termed the 'worldly frivolities' of her gay and joyous nature. Above all, he felt keenly the loss of social status which the marriage entailed on him in the estimation of his own sect. The young wife was sternly forbidden to have any intercourse with her relatives and friends; and her husband's sister, who was a maiden lady of very gloomy religious views, was installed as housekeeper ostensibly, but really to play 'propriety' to her unregenerate young relative. Happiness could not, of course, exist in this state of matters; and when the grim messenger arrived with the fiat which dissolved the ill-assorted union, it was perhaps a relief to all.

Brought up under a terribly severe code of social ethics, the theatre, concert, and ballroom were represented to Hector as only so many roads to perdition; and being of an amiable disposition, and desirous of pleasing his father, he had up till now, when he had attained his

twenty-third year, sedulously eschewed these enticing forms of social amusement. It was not destined, however, that he was always to remain in this state of innocent ignorance. A brilliant theatrical star visited the city, and turned the heads of all—both young and old, male and female, alike. Her stage-name was Violet d'Esterre (no one knew her real name), and it was on her exquisite delineation of Shakspearean tragedy that her justly earned fame rested. The college students were particularly enthusiastic in her praise, and crowded the theatre nightly to admire her beauty, and listen entranced to the melody of her sublime elocution. One evening, Hector, persuaded by his companions, consented to accompany them to hear this paragon of passionate declamation. The play was the old, old story of the hapless lovers of Verona. Such a hold had her impersonation of the intensely loving Juliet taken of the public, that they insisted on it being performed night after night, to the exclusion of other tragic parts in which she was equally celebrated. If any of our readers have not been in a theatre until they were about the age of Hector, they will be able to realise the very powerful sensuous effect the music, beautiful scenery, bright dresses, and decorations had on his imagination, and how they conduced to give full effect to the sense of bewildered admiration he felt when the curtain rose on the banqueting hall in Capulet's house, and the fair daughter of Capulet. How feebly, it seemed to him, did Romeo express his feelings in saying:

> O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
> It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
> Like a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear:
> Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!

Mademoiselle d'Esterre's physical qualifications for the part were superb. Her countenance, which was Italian in cast of features and complexion, boasted of a pair of orbs of the deepest violet black. Large and lustrous, they were mobile and expressive in the highest degree. When they first rested on Romeo's form, they dilated with the eager fire of southern passion, and as quickly drooped in maidenly confusion and modesty. Her whole attitude showed she felt she had met her destiny; and before she had even spoken a syllable, the audience felt they were under the spell of an enchantress. Then, with what simple natural dignity did she invest the few words the girl-lover addresses to love-stricken Romeo, already commencing his love-

making as ‘holy palmer.’ From the moment the curtain was raised until it descended at the end of the fifth act, Hector sat spellbound, oblivious to everything on earth save the scenes that were being enacted on the stage. His companions had to arouse him when it became time to quit the theatre.

‘Well, Mackinnon,’ said Charley Smith, ‘what do you think of the d’Esterre? Jolly-like girl, isn’t she?’

‘Don’t speak of the young lady in that vulgar way,’ he replied. ‘I am certain that girl is as pure and good as Juliet was.’

‘I am not saying a word against her—nobody can do that,’ his companion rejoined. ‘Surely, surely, you’ve not got hit with her charms—you, of all men!’

Hector was in no mood for badinage at that moment, and pleading a headache, he hurried off to his lodgings. He could not imagine what was the matter; but after tossing all night uneasily in bed, he had to confess to himself next morning that he, Hector Mackinnon, the budding clergyman, the lifelong hater of things theatrical and bohemianisms of every sort, had fallen hopelessly and irretrievably in love with an actress he had seen for the first and only time a few hours ago! There was no use in trying to disguise the truth to himself; he felt—or fancied he felt, which comes to much the same thing—that life without possession of this fair divinity would not be worth living; but that, with her by his side, the roughest tempests that fate could send would feel like gentle wooing zephyrs.

It was not to be expected that this state of matters could long remain secret from Hector’s companions. His theses and themes remained unwritten; his answers to the Professor’s questions were of the most incoherent description, and at last he discontinued his attendance at college altogether. Inheriting a considerable share of his father’s stern determination, he was not of a nature to suffer in silence the agonies of a secret and unrequited passion. The inspirer of the consuming yet delicious flame which burned within his bosom must, he admitted, be some few years older than himself; for had she not been a celebrity in her profession for over a dozen years now? Well, what of that? Was that any reason why he should deny himself the lifelong companionship of the only woman he ever loved or could love? To marry her meant, he knew, an open rupture with his father, and the abandonment of his ministerial career; but were these trifles for one

moment to be weighed in the balance against the pure and unalloyed bliss of a lifetime spent in the society of his darling? No—a thousand times, no! In this wise did he reason with himself, as many a lover has done before, and, we may safely predict, will do again. His life had now only one object, and that was to gain an introduction to Mademoiselle d'Esterre, and press his suit with all the ardour of a lover who felt that his life's happiness depended on the result.

Every night found him at the theatre, gazing on the unconscious cause of his distraction 'till his life's love left him through his eyes.' The rich clear notes of her magnificent contralto voice seemed to flood the theatre with the music of the spheres, and filled his soul with an agony of delight. At this period, it would have been an unspeakable relief to his overcharged feelings, if he had had some sympathetic friend to make a confidant of. But, alas, the sufferer from the darts of the rosy god, like the victim of prosaic toothache, obtains no sympathy from his kind.

Time wore on, and the posters announced the last six nights of Mademoiselle's engagement. He had tried his best to procure an introduction, but without success, the friends and associates of his past life being widely outside of theatrical circles. He found out, however, where she lodged, and the hour at which she usually took her daily promenade. In vain did he follow her at a respectful distance, in the fond hope that some drunk man, runaway horse, or other street casualty, might afford the means of an impromptu introduction; unfortunately, the pedestrians were all sober, and the horses jogged on in a manner remarkably sedate and correct. At last, when almost reduced to despair, an ingenious thought occurred to him. The talented actress occasionally gave morning recitations and readings. He was possessed of considerable literary ability, and what was to hinder him from composing a suitable piece for recitation, sending it to her for approval, and by that means obtaining a personal interview? Being favourably impressed with the feasibility of the scheme, he set to work, and composed a hundred-line poem in blank verse, in which the torments of unrequited love were very forcibly if not elegantly portrayed. With a trembling hand, he dropped this in the letter-box, accompanied by a polite note craving her acceptance of the offering.

Who shall attempt to describe the thirty-six dreary hours of suspense that elapsed before a reply came, in a polite little epistle redolent of

patchouli, thanking Mr Mackinnon for his kind present, which she would be glad to use on the first suitable occasion? She was, however, of opinion that, from an elocutionary point of view, certain alterations would tend to make it much more effective. Would Mr Mackinnon honour Mademoiselle by calling on her at her residence at noon the following day, when said alterations could be discussed? The poor fellow almost cried as he again and again pressed the precious missive to his lips; and it was some time before his spirits were sufficiently calmed down to admit of his inditing a coherent reply. Hope now lent her roseate hues to our hero's love prospects, and it was with difficulty he compelled himself to await the slow progress of the hands on the dial of his watch till they were conjoined over the happy hour appointed for his interview with her who held his life's happiness at her sole command.

Arrived at his destination, he timidly rang the door-bell, and on giving the servant his card, was informed the lady was 'at home.' On entering the drawing-room, he beheld Mademoiselle reclining in a graceful attitude on a low ottoman. She wore a *négligé* costume of some sort of soft warm cream-coloured material, which harmonised delightfully with her clear, transparent, olive complexion, and displayed the symmetry of her exquisitely formed figure to great advantage. She wore no jewelry; her only ornament was a beautiful Marshal M'Mahon rose, the deep crimson petals of which formed a charming contrast to the raven tresses on which they reposed. There were two other occupants of the room; and it was easy to see, from their 'at-home' air, that they were not merely visitors. One was a brisk little lady, with a pleasant good-humoured expression, who it would be safe to guess had seen at least fifty summers. The other was a tall stately girl of not more than seventeen or eighteen. She had evidently been practising at the piano, which lay open, with the score of a new opera on the music-holder. Had Hector's mind not been so fully engrossed, he probably would have noticed a considerable resemblance between her and the fair object of his devotions. The principal difference lay in the colour of the hair, the complexion, and the stature. The young lady was a pronounced blonde, possessing large azure orbs of almost dreamy softness, and a wealth of light reddish-golden hair carelessly twisted and fastened in a coil at the back of the head.

As Hector advanced, Mademoiselle rose gracefully from her seat and,

glancing at his card, said in the same rich contralto tones which had so inthralled him in the theatre: ‘Ah, Mr Mackinnon, I perceive! Good-morning, sir. Pray, be seated.’ Holding out her hand, he had the brief precious delight of pressing it for a second in his trembling palm. —‘Now, you needn’t leave the room,’ she said, addressing her two companions. ‘This is the gentleman who did me the honour of sending me the poem entitled *Amor in Mors*.—Permit me to introduce you to my good friend Mrs Eskell; and to Mademoiselle Andresen, my niece.’

The introductions being over, Hector resumed his seat. He never felt so embarrassed in the whole course of his life. How fondly had he rehearsed in his mind the many brilliant tender speeches he would give utterance to on this occasion! Now that the wished-for opportunity had arrived, he sat speechless. It is but fair to say, however, that he did not contemplate the presence of third parties at the interview. Still, their presence should not have tongue-tied him as it did—he, the glibest debater and the best elocutionist in the college.

Seeing his embarrassment, the lady came to his relief. ‘Well, Mr Mackinnon, I am very much pleased with your poem, and I think, with a few slight alterations, it might make a very effective recitation. Do you not think, though, the title is a little too lugubrious? Could you not substitute some other word for Mors? Just reflect! Fancy me dying every night for the past fortnight as Juliet! It is really too bad of the good folks of your city to insist on my manager making me repeat night after night a part which I have begun really to detest.’

‘O Mademoiselle, do not say that,’ cried Hector. ‘Ah, if you but knew the delightful thrill you send through the audience in the balcony scene—and—and—the tears you cause them to shed when the unfortunate heroine—Shakspeare’s greatest creation’——

‘Shakspeare’s greatest fiddlestick!’ she replied, laughing merrily. ‘What people see in her, I’m sure I don’t know! To my mind, she’s a forward young chit, that would have been much better employed in mending Papa Capulet’s hose and helping her mother to keep house, than philandering with her Romeo.—But about *Amor in Mors*. Don’t you think, now, you could make it just the tiniest little bit funny? I do so long to get out of this continued round of love-making, murder, and suicide.’

Could he believe his ears? Was this cynical, matter-of-fact woman identical with the fair embodiment of transcendental, ethereal love,

on whose accents he had hung with enraptured delight for the past few nights? No, it could not be; there must be some strange mistake. Yet, when her mobile features were for a moment in repose, there he beheld the same deep, lustrous, unfathomable eyes—the same sweet innocent mouth, with its half-childlike pouting lips. He was bewildered, and as in a dream.

'You are pleased, Mademoiselle, to be satirical this morning,' he replied. 'I cannot do you the injustice of supposing you are in earnest in what you say. No one could enact the part of Juliet so nobly unless she were capable of imbuing herself thoroughly with the divine passion attributed to her by her creator.'

'Believe me, you are quite wrong there, Mr Mackinnon. It is not by any means those parts which actors have the natural emotional qualifications for, that they excel in portraying. Nature in that case *destroys* art; and hence it is that parts that actors like best are precisely those they act worst. For myself, I am guided entirely by public criticism, and confine myself to those rôles that draw the best houses. Of course I have my own predilections. I have a very fair singing voice, and think I should be able to do very well in opera-bouffe. Oh, I *do* dote on opera-bouffe!—But about *Amor in Mors*. I really think the language is splendid—quite as good as Shakspeare's, I daresay, although I don't profess to be a literary critic. Well, if you would alter the conclusion in such a way as to make the audience take a good hearty laugh after I had wound them up to the crying pitch, I believe it would be effective, and I will line it in the bills for my first Saturday morning readings.'

'Alas, Mademoiselle, I fear my poor verses are not susceptible of being changed in the way you wish; but if you allow me, I shall endeavour to write something in a lighter vein, that may have the happiness to merit your approval. Permit me to ask you to retain the verses you have.'

'With pleasure, sir,' she replied.—'I presume you are of the literary profession?'

Hector was not very sure whether a divinity student came of right under that category or not, but he replied in the affirmative.

'Well, then, we shall be glad to see you, if you can come along here to supper at twelve o'clock on Friday first. It is a farewell entertainment

I am giving to a few friends of the press, and others. If you have your new piece done, bring it with you; I'll recite it, and we'll see what they think of it.' Thus saying, she rose, as if to indicate the interview was at an end; and after making his adieux, Hector departed in a very anomalous state of mind. The bright, girlish, gushing Juliet of the footlights was for ever annihilated in his mind. In her stead stood an undeniably handsome, accomplished woman of the world, gay, good-humoured, and apparently good-hearted; but so utterly devoid of all sentiment as to frankly avow a longing for opera-bouffe! By all the rules of common-sense, our hero being disillusioned, should have at once fallen *out* of love. This, however, did not happen. After the first shock of finding her so different in her ideas from what he expected was over, the subjectivity of his passion asserted itself, and his mind soon formed a fresh ideal of female perfection, of which she was again the incarnation.

He had but two days in which to compose his second recitation. Striking a new chord, he wrote it in a light cynical vein, such as he thought would please the fair actress, judging from her conversation with him. He wrought hard at it, polishing and repolishing every line, until it reached, as he thought, as near as possible to a state of brilliant perfection. When the eventful Friday night arrived, he started for Mademoiselle's residence with a much greater feeling of confidence than he had experienced on the former occasion. He was the first arrival, and while he sat in the drawing-room, Mademoiselle Andresen and Mrs Eskell entered. On his first visit, he had not paid much attention to the appearance of the former, and he was almost surprised to see how exceedingly pretty she was. The old lady was very talkative, and was not long in making him aware she was a distant relative of Mademoiselle's, and always played 'Nurse' to her Juliet. Mademoiselle Andresen, whose father was a celebrated violinist in Stockholm, had just completed her course of training for the lyric stage at the Conservatoire, and was now on a visit to her aunt, to benefit by her instructions in the technicalities of stage business. On being invited by Hector, the young lady sat down to the piano, and sang an exquisite Danish ballad, which fairly charmed him. The company now began to arrive, and he conducted the two ladies down to the supper-room.

Exceedingly pretty, and exceedingly happy too, did Mademoiselle d'Esterre look, as she sat at the head of the table listening to the

cheerful conversation of her guests. There were not more than a dozen and a half present—four ladies and four gentlemen of them being members of Mademoiselle's company. After supper, and a due period of vivacity over the wine, the fair hostess called for silence, and intimated her intention of reciting Mr Mackinnon's new poem. The author felt himself blushing to the tips of his ears as he heard the—to him—familiar lines tripped off in her melodious voice with rare elocutionary art. At the conclusion, the applause was great; and the gentlemen of the press declared with one voice it was the best thing of the season, and that the author would be sure to make his mark if he applied himself to dramatic literature. With toast and song the hours sped pleasantly away till two o'clock, when the cabs began to arrive for the guests. Hector had been all night in brilliant spirits, and fairly astonished himself with the smartness of his witty repartees, and the ease with which he accommodated himself to society so different from that to which he had been accustomed. His intoxication of bliss reached its climax when, as the dispersing company were singing *Auld Langsyne* in the lobby, his hostess whispered in his ear: 'Wait; I wish to speak with you. Go up to the drawing-room.'

He did so, and awaited her coming with trembling, eager impatience. When she came into the room, she looked grave, even sad, he thought. 'We may never see each other again, Mr Mackinnon, and I cannot think of letting you go away to-night without some recompense for the pretty poem you wrote for me. Pray, accept of this in recognition of it, and—and as a token of my regard for you;' and she handed him a magnificent cluster diamond ring.

His head swam; he scarcely knew what he was doing, and fell on his knees before her.

'O Mademoiselle!' he cried, his voice hoarse with emotion, 'you are an angel!—infinitely too good for me—too good for any one on earth. Oh, how can I dare look in your sweet face and utter the words which burn on my tongue! Forgive me for my presumption in daring to say so, but I love you—love you with my whole heart and soul. Dare I ask you to be my wife!'

Mademoiselle d'Esterre at first looked frightened, thinking her friend had taken leave of his senses, or was giving her a small sample of his histrionic powers. When he had made an end of his speech, however, she apparently could not help bursting into an immoderate fit of

laughter.

‘Rise up, you silly fellow!’ she cried, ‘and don’t make a baby of yourself.’

Her suppliant, who was in a state of bewilderment, mechanically obeyed.

She continued: ‘Upon my word, Mr Mackinnon, you have paid a great compliment to my skill in preserving my looks. Why, my poor boy, I could easily be your mother! I was forty-three on my last birthday!’

It might have been expected that this astounding piece of information would have effectually quenched the flame in the breast of the unfortunate lover, yet it had not that effect. ‘Alas! Mademoiselle, I am sorry that the disparity in our years is so great, although I knew you must be a few years older than myself. But what is age where true love exists? Believe me, if you consent to our union, never will you hear me refer to the dis’——

‘Stop, stop, you foolish boy!’ the lady cried. ‘Even were I such a terrible fool as you suppose, there is an insuperable legal obstacle in the way.’

‘What is that?’ he asked, wonderingly.

‘Why, I’m your aunt!’ she replied. ‘My sister Agatha was married to your father!’

The mortification experienced by our hero, in consequence of the ludicrous incident we have described, was extreme, and it was a few weeks before his mind recovered its accustomed equanimity. When it did, he resumed his college studies; but from the time lost, and the still partially unsettled state of his mind, he failed to pass his examination, and gave up his intention of qualifying for the ministry in disgust. His aunt’s company soon paid another visit to the city, and she advised him to try ‘adapting’ French plays. He was tolerably successful in this, and by her influence, was able to get them placed with some of the London managers. He then determined to devote himself entirely to dramatic literature, and being much thrown into the company of his fair cousin, Miss Andresen, a mutual affection

grew up between them, which culminated in marriage. We understand they live very happily, although his wife does sometimes joke him on his love-adventure with his aunt.

MEHALAH.

[This poem is written on the chief character in the novel of the same name.]

SLEEP on, Mehalah; let the rude waves beat
  Their sullen music in thy deafened ear;
Whether they roar in storm, or whisper peace,
    Thou canst not hear.

What matter though the gale in fury rave?
  Beneath the surface, all is calm and fair;
Held close by flowers too beauteous for the day,
    Thou slumberest there.

Unseen by mortal eye, the ocean sprites
  Vie who shall deck thy form with fairest grace,
And many a sea-born flower and waving weed
    Adorn thy face.

But when the shadows of descending day
  Gleam on the marsh, and fire the western sea,
Thy spirit 'scapes the chains that bind it down,
    And rises free.

As vesper chimes grow dimmer and more faint,
  And sink to silence, conquered by the storm,
The fishers, hast'ning home to those they love,
    Behold thy form,

Thy face so proud, thine eyes so dim and sad,
  Thy hair unshackled streaming towards the west,
The crimson 'Gloriana' burning bright
    Upon thy breast.

But as they gaze, the vision fades away,
  Dragged to the depths by iron hand and chain;

The seamew shrieks, and darkness o'er the world
Resumes his reign.

J. B. F.

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FOOTNOTES:

[1] *Roster*, in military language, is the list of persons liable to a certain duty.

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